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every precept they preached for the sake of forcing their views upon others, and then sulk and refuse to play if they could not have their own way."

For those who enjoy hard hitting there are stimulating passages in these reminiscences. On the whole, however, they are less instructive historically and politically, less rewarding in human interest—in anecdotes and estimates of men—than might be expected.

FRENCH NOVELISTS OF TODAY (Second Series). By Winifred Stephens. New York: John Lane Company, 1915.

Varying in quality between merely "popular" or conventional interest and really illuminating criticism, the recently published volume by Winifred Stephens, entitled *French Novelists of Today*, seldom fails to pique curiosity and occasionally satisfies the desire for real literary interpretation. The opening chapter, which deals with *The French Novel on the Eve of the War*, though cursory, is well worth reading. With lightness of touch and with precision, the author outlines and illustrates the modern French tendencies in fiction, enabling her readers to feel in some measure the power of the Catholic Revival—a stream of thought and feeling that flows in two main directions, the one dogmatic, constructive, classical, the other mystic, liberal, romantic; the one dominated by the traditionism of Barrès, the other by the vitalism of Bergson. The decay of rationalism, the gradual abandonment of irony, the symptomatic glorification of sport—to all these elements the author gives some sort of form and connection.

As interpretations the chapters of this volume are not always very satisfactory. There is sometimes a sense of effort in keeping upon the high critical level and a tendency to use, for instance, the word "significant" without much meaning. From the essay upon Marcelle Tinayre one derives little beyond the impression of a vivid feminine personality and a general effect of romance and color. Comment upon Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe* is doubtless somewhat like comment upon the Atlantic Ocean: it can hardly be adequate. Miss Stephens is analytical to the extent of indicating in this vast work "the blending in one temperament of the tendencies of Eastern and Western, of Teutonic and Celtic culture." Perhaps her most illuminating comment, however, is her remark to the effect that, despite obvious differences, *Jean Christophe* and *Les Misérables* resemble each other in their intense aliveness. Concerning the brothers Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, lovers of life and glamour and poets of *une existence tourmentée*, we learn but little that is critically distinctive or memorable. Again, the account of Pierre Mille, who has been called, not very accurately, "the French Kipling," is

rather an imperfect description than an interpretation. Concerning René Boylesve, on the other hand, the author writes with a deeper, or at any rate a more contagious, appreciation. Readers of her chapter upon this author will receive a clear impression of an artist's work and character, an impression enhanced in detail and in feeling above the obvious.

On the whole the accounts of French novelists which this volume contains are entertaining, critically intelligent, and deserving of at least a rapid reading.

GOOD FRIDAY AND OTHER POEMS. By John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916.

As to Mr. Masefield's possession of genius there can be little serious dispute. As to the success he achieves in attempting to deal with so tremendous a theme as that of his dramatic poem, *Good Friday*, there may well be a difference of opinion. The theme—nothing less than the Crucifixion—may seem to many minds to dwarf the art of the poet—though Mr. Masefield's poetry does not belittle the theme. The devices of the dramatist and of the poet—studied simplicity, suggestions, restraint—are all needed here, and they all appear to be with relation to this theme rather trifling.

Mr. Masefield's mood seems not to be that of one who attempts things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme; his attitude appears almost, if the word may be pardoned, evasive. The grandeur of the subject is so far relied upon to speak for itself that the impressiveness of the poem as a poem becomes to a certain extent fictitious. The reader feels that he ought to be impressed and thrilled—in some degree he actually is so—and yet one's direct response to the words of the poet lacks that strength and spontaneity that great poetry ought to excite.

The case is otherwise with the sonnets by Mr. Masefield which are included in this volume. In these there is a real depth and wonderful expressiveness; there is an almost savage realism, a strange picturesqueness. One sonnet in particular is notable for its union of these qualities with lucidity—a characteristic not equally present in all:

There on the darkened deathbed, dies the brain
That flared three several times in seventy years;
It cannot lift the silly hand again,
Nor speak, nor sing, it neither sees nor hears.
And muffled mourners put it in the ground
And then go home, and in the earth it lies,
Too dark for vision and too deep for sound,
The million cells that made a good man wise.
Yet for a few short years an influence stirs
A sense or wraith or essence of him dead,